



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 18, 2011

Mr. James Mu
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 4004
Huntsville, Texas 77342-4004

OR2011-07008

Dear Mr. Mu:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 417979.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for 1) information pertaining to a named inmate who died in custody, 2) information pertaining to a specified investigation, and 3) the shift roster of a certain unit during a specified time period. You indicate that the department has released or will release some of the requested information to the requestor. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.134 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.134(a) of the Government Code relates to inmates of the department and provides:

Except as provided by Subsection (b) or by Section 552.029 [of the Government Code], information obtained or maintained by the [department] is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the department.

Gov't Code § 552.134(a). Section 552.134 is explicitly made subject to section 552.029, which provides, in relevant part:

[n]otwithstanding [s]ection . . . 552.134, the following information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the [department] is subject to required disclosure under Section 552.021:

....

(8) basic information regarding the death of an inmate in custody, an incident involving the use of force, or an alleged crime involving the inmate.

Id. § 552.029(8). Upon review, we find the submitted information pertains to individuals confined as inmates in a facility operated by the department; therefore, we conclude section 552.134(a) is generally applicable to this information. We note, however, some of the information at issue pertains to alleged crimes involving inmates and another inmate's death in custody. Therefore, the department must release basic information about the alleged crimes and inmate's death pursuant to section 552.029(8). Basic information includes the time and place of the incident, names of inmates and department officials directly involved, a brief narrative of the incident, a brief description of any injuries sustained, and information regarding criminal charges or disciplinary actions filed as a result of the incident. Accordingly, with the exception of basic information, the department must withhold the submitted information pursuant to section 552.134(a) of the Government Code.¹

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Laura Ream Lemus
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LRL/em

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the department's remaining arguments against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 417979

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)